

# Hillandale

## News

No 201 December 1994

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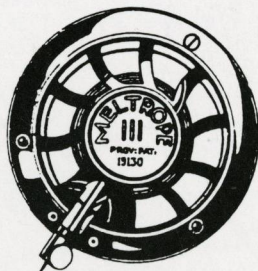
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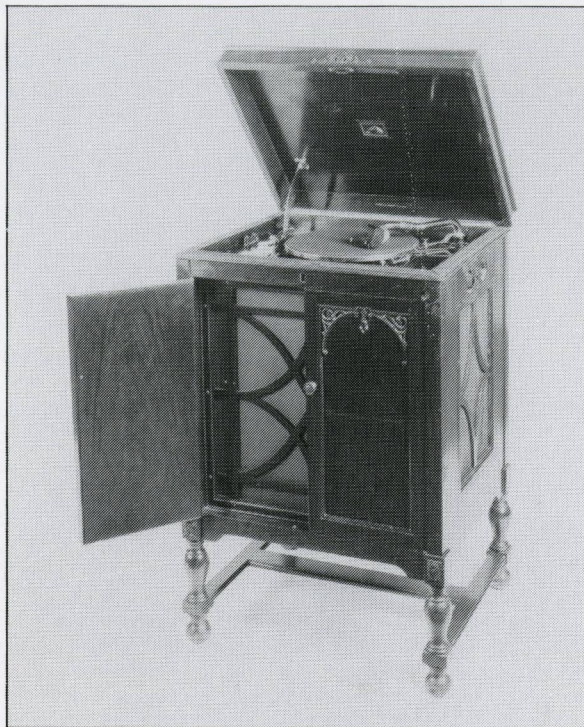
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Tuesday 31 January 1995



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# Hillandale News

The Official Journal of The City of London Phonograph and Gramophone Society

Founded in 1919

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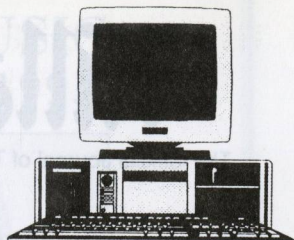
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Front cover illustration: Advert from *The Gramophone* December 1929

## EDITOR'S DESK



### The Future Shape of C.L.P.G.S.

Members will recall that they agreed at the Annual General Meeting of 1992 that the Society should become a company limited by guarantee so as to protect its assets and that application should be made to the Charity Commissioners for registration as a charity. I am pleased to announce that the Society's application to become a charity has been accepted. For further details I would refer readers to the report, on page 199, by our solicitor, Stephen Gadd given at this year's AGM. Members are invited to attend an Extraordinary General Meeting called for 16th March 1995 to authorize the Committee to proceed with the final moves to put these changes into effect. All being well these changes will be in place in time for the financial year beginning 1st August 1995.

### December Meeting

This is a members night with the theme of *Relations*. Anyone bringing along their choice of entertainment on this theme will enjoy some traditional seasonal hospitality. Do come along - you will be most welcome.

### January Meeting

1995 opens with our meetings secretary, Geoff Edwards, giving a programme called *Pianola Fol-de-Rolls*. I urge you to come along and enjoy a good night of old fashioned entertainment presented by Geoff in his own inimitable manner.

### Frank Hurlock and Edward S. Walker

I have just heard the sad news that Frank Hurlock and Edward S. Walker have died. Both these gentlemen were well known to many of our members. Tributes to them will be published in the next issue.

### Season's Greetings

The Officers and Committee of C.L.P.G.S. wish the compliments of the season to our readers and hope that 1995 will be a successful year for them.

Please note that material intended for inclusion in *Hillandale News* must reach the Editor not later than **six weeks before the first day of the month of issue**.

Hence the deadline for the **December** issue will be **15th December 1994**.

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Views expressed in this magazine do not necessarily reflect those of the Editor.



# THE BRITISH RECORD INDUSTRY DURING THE REIGN OF KING EDWARD VII: 1901 -1910

by Frank Andrews

## Part 3

### 1904 - And Both Markets Broaden

Following the introduction of the hugely successful *Edison Gold Moulded* cylinders at the beginning of the 1903-4 season by the National Phonograph Co., others makes began to introduce "gold moulding" into their manufacturing process. Edison Bell had four types of cylinder on sale: *Gold Moulded* at 1s. (Edison's were at 1s. 6d.); *Popular* at 11d; Edison Bell *Ebony Indestructibles* (the Lambert type cylinders) at 1s. 3d. and their *Grand Concert* 5" records at 10s.

The British Phonogram Company described their records as "gold moulded". They later changed the name to *Brent's Gold Moulded* both selling at only 9d. each.

The Electric Record Company was formed in the early spring of 1904 by Arthur and Thomas Hough (two of J. E. Hough's sons) along with a Mr F. Matthews. Hough was the General Manager of Edison Bell. Arthur and Thomas claimed to be the first to sell "gold moulded" cylinders for only 1s. each. This caused Edison Bell to reduce theirs to 1s. The Star Records of Norwich (which in 1904 had still to open its London office) did not go "gold moulded" during that year, although Britannia records of S. Carter and Co. of London continued selling throughout 1904 as *moulded* records, they did not use the term "gold moulded" even after a new moulded method was announced during the year.

Columbia, with its XP cylinders selling at 1s. 3d., announced a price reduction to 1s. and *Excelsior Records* (from Excelsior Phonostores), selling at 1s., were reduced during the year to 10d. each. I doubt if these

records were the German-made cylinders from Excelsiorwerke.

The Lambert Co. Ltd. was established during 1904 by a Mr Greenberg. He had acquired the rights to the Chicago-based Lambert Co.'s manufacturing system, from the Edison Bell Consolidated Phonograph Co. Ltd. The Lambert Company and Edison Bell both occupied the same Euston Square buildings from where the new company continued production. Lambert records were described as *Lambert Gold Moulded Permanent Records* and *Unbreakable*. As a result of this new company's founding, Edison Bell after April 1904 had no new issues of its *Edison Bell Ebony Indestructible Records*. The new Lamberts were priced at 1s. 6d.

Another new indestructible cylinder record on the market in 1904 was *The Axton Ruby Indestructible Record*. This record complemented the Axton phonographs introduced in 1903.

From Scotland, in addition to Peter Wyper's continuing Empress Records (which were all master recordings) came *The Noble Record* from the **Noble Manufacturing Company** with bagpipe and concertina repertoires.

Messrs. Sinclair and Young, who had promoted the National Phonograph Company, since acquired by George Croyden Marks on behalf of the American Edison concern, had begun trading in the City of London as **The Phonograph Company**. They stocked Edison lines and also advertised their own *Sinyo Records*. J. L. Young was an old hand at recording. In 1893, he used the Phonograph Company as his trading name,



after his departure in 1890 from Gouraud and the Edison Phonograph Company of London where he had been general manager.

Some other new makes of cylinder advertised in the *Talking Machine News* were *Perfection Records* retailing at 9d. each from **Eustace Oliver and Company**; the *New Falcon Moulded Records* from the **New Falcon Works Ltd.** of London; *Hesse's Hebrew Records*, from **Hesse and Company**. These were actually Edison Bell recorded and manufactured. Another instructional record could be had from **Short-hand Record Company**, called the *Pioneer Shorthand Record*, which might indicate that Lucock and Packman of Pioneer records (which continued through 1904) were both the makers and recorders.

Other records which continued from 1903 were the *Grand Concert Cylinders* from the **Multiphone Company** of Chiswick, priced 6s. 6d.; *The Markona Records* from Symonds London Stores Ltd; the Welsh repertoire *Cambrian Records* from Wm. Paddon and Co.

Following the sale of the International Phonograph and Indestructible Record Company, the new owners traded under the name of the **International Indestructible Record Company** with the cylinder records and their boxes marked likewise.

Pathé Frères (London) Ltd. continued to offer its three sizes of cylinders, *Pathé Salon* at 3s. 6d., *Pathé Intermediate Salon* at 2s. 6d. and *Pathé* at 1s. 4d.

Just two weeks before the end of 1904, one of the most important new players in the cylinder market, was formed under the name of **The Sterling Record Co. Ltd.** of which more later.

## 1904 and The Disc Record Industry's Progress

At the end of 1903 there were just three disc record companies, that is if we ignore the novelty of the *Stollwerck Chocolate Phonograph* with its foil-covered chocolate records, recorded by the phonograph (hill and dale) cut. **Gebruder Stollwerck** of Germany were in the confectionery business and the manufacture of coin-operated sales apparatus. They had formerly held the Edison German phonograph patents, but appeared to have done very little in exploiting those. Buyers who purchased their phonograph could replace the chocolate discs with a waxy coated disc made of an unbreakable compressed substance. These products had been available since 1902. The new year opened with Columbia and its American-made discs - including British, American and some continental recordings - being re-styled as *Columbia Phonograph Co. General*. These records replaced the former *Columbia Disc Record* label in both 7" and 10" sizes.

Nicole records, made by the Nicole Record Company for Nicole Frères Ltd. were available in the 7" size only. The Gramophone and Typewriter Ltd. records were available in three sizes, the *Gramophone Record* (7"), *Gramophone Concert Record* (10") and *Gramophone Monarch* (12"), the two larger sizes also available in the red label *Celebrity Artists'* series. Gramophone and Typewriter record catalogues contained recordings of British, American (Victor) and continental origin. All were made in Germany.

The Gramophone and Typewriter Ltd. were also the owners of Zonophone Records (whose records were of the 7" and 10" sizes). *Disco Reales* records were also produced by the International Zonophone



Company. This record company had been its subsidiary for the previous six months. Made in Berlin, they too had British, American and continental repertoires. However, the British Zonophone Records catalogue, of February 1904, drew on the International company's repertoire. The selection (which was undertaken by Louis Sterling) included only a couple or so of the USA Zonophone discs, and they had gone by July.

To handle the British trade in Zonophones, The Gramophone and Typewriter Ltd. organised a sub-division of its business which they named **The British Zonophone Company**. This sub-division occupied separate premises in the City Road, E.C. The black and gold labelled Zonophones were re-

placed by green and gold labels when re-pressing became necessary. All new recordings to the catalogue from February 1904 took the green and gold labels.

[At Neasden, Zonophone 42643 with Peter Dawson as Hector Grant in *Sister* was played.]

In February 1904, F. M. Prescott's new *Odeon Records* of 19cm (7½") and 27cm (10¾") sizes, from his new International Talking Machine Co.m.b.H. factory at Weissensee, Berlin were introduced simultaneously in many countries in Europe, including Britain. Thus The Gramophone and Typewriter Ltd. were now faced with its most serious international competition. Furthermore the Odeon discs were made as



Nicole Master Record



*duplex* or double-sided recorded discs. Prescott claimed patents for the same in various countries, the names appearing on the brown and gold labels which adorned the discs. That patent, still pending, had not covered for the 1902 double-sided Zonophones supplied to the *Casa Edison* concern. The patent was taken out by Adenor Petit, the recording and technical expert of the International Phonograph and Indestructible Record Company of Liverpool, a company on which he and Prescott sat as directors. Petit gained patents in the United States of America after much difficulty (with Prescott taking a half share in the patents); but how many other countries granted patent protection, I do not know.

Increased competition came from Nicole Frères in March 1904, when they introduced the 10" Nicole Record made by their manufacturing company at Saffron Hill, London E.C. at a price of 1s. 6d.

[Nicole 10" disc 5255 *Cleopatra* - cornet solo with Charles Butterworth was played at Neasden.]

With double-sided discs on the market in various countries, Columbia began coupling a few of its single-sided discs in 1904. Only a few of these records reached the catalogue as the company was probably frightened off by Prescott's International Talking Machine Co.m.b.H. advertisements warning about infringement of its patents if double-sided recorded discs were sold.

As the Odeon discs were priced at 2s. 6d. and 5s. (the same price as The Gramophone and Typewriter Ltd.'s 7" and 10" discs) and taking into account that the discs were not only slightly larger but were *duplex* recorded they were less than half the price of the oldest discs on the market.

The British Odeon agency was Messrs. C. and J. Ullman, the ex-Zonophone agents. They began trading under the name of **The Odeon Disc Record Co.** with a line of Odeon machines complementing the Odeon discs.

[Odeon 32352 *The Salvation Army Doll* by the Imperial Military Band was played at Neasden.]

Already we have seen that events in Germany, such as the establishment of the Zonophone and Odeon concerns, albeit with American management, were becoming important in the development of the European disc industry. Germans soon replaced the American influence, an influence that had presented Britain, firstly with the Berliner discs, followed by Climax and Columbia discs, and also the small and short-lived Vitaphone and U.S.A. Zonophone imports. Even the Nicole business had begun with an American, George Henry Burt, as a major contributor to the production of discs. Another American, the well-known and oft-recorded artist, Steve Porter, was engaged as recording expert by Nicole. He already had been with Waterfield, Clifford and Co. with its New Century Records. Although the U.K. disc market was to have further contributions from some minor American labels, the U.K. development was to come mainly from German concerns with Pathé of France and one Italian business providing The Gramophone and Typewriter Ltd. with growing competition.

It was a shake-up in the officers controlling The Gramophone Co. (Italy) Ltd. with headquarters in Milan, which led directly to the next company becoming founded in London.

William Michaelis and his brother Alfred were founder directors of the Italian Gramophone Company. Alfred was appointed the general manager. In 1904, Alfred had been acting in a manner which did not meet with the approval of the parent company in London, and he had to leave. This was some time in July 1904. His brother William probably left earlier, as by March 1904. He was directly advertising in Germany his **Neophon Disc Phonographs**, made by **Uhren-Fabrik-Villigen A.G.** at Villigen in



Baden. Neophon Disc Phonograph records were also on sale, recorded with a vertical cutting method (hill-and-dale).

By the second week on September 1904, **The Neophone Disc Phonograph Company**, a syndicate, was established in London. The first discs were recorded abroad and of 19cm and 27cm sizes, the same sizes as the Odeon discs. The records were made of compressed card and covered with a white enamel compound which carried the recorded sounds. Of course, they were unbreakable but they did tend to warp. They were single-sided and the cheapest discs yet, being only 6d. and 1s. according to size. They became available from October 1904 from **The Neophone Company Ltd.**, registered in London. British recordings followed later.

Alfred Michaelis remained in Milan and teamed up with an engineer called Dino

Foa. Having close connections with Ricordi, the Italian music publishing house, with Giordano the composer and conductor, with the La Scala Theatre, Milan's management and also with a number of its singers, Alfred Michaelis founded a recording business in October, which by January 1905 took the name of **Società Italiana di Fonitipia in Accomandita, Milano**. There is documentary evidence which suggest that through this new company he intended to put The Gramophone Co. (Italy) Ltd. out of business; more of this later.

A business differing from the usual cylinder or disc companies began advertising during 1904. This was **The Electro-Mechanical Engineering Works** of Durham Yard in Teesdale Road, off the Hackney Road, London, E. Their advertisement reads: "Dealers:- Why not make your own records? Master records with your own announce-





ments with first class duplicating machines and moulding plants with wax for blanks and for moulding records." In 1905 they were still selling their first class duplicating, shaving and recording machines, and blank cylinders at "Lowest possible process". Another concern selling both disc and cylinder records was established in London, in November 1904. This was the firm of Monsieur and Madame Duval of Paris. Under the name of **Phonogram Duval Ltd.**, their concern had been founded in Paris some time earlier. They had opened in London following their acquisition of The Talkophone Syndicate Ltd. and the goodwill of business already being done in Britain with Duval lines. Catalogues of the Duval's French recordings became available from their premises in Victoria Street, London S.W. In February 1905, the parent company took over a factory at Genevilliers, near Paris, at the same time acquiring the previous owner's business and his clientele. The Duval company of London lasted 2 years and 8 months with its *Duval Records*.

### 1905 - Failures and New Enterprises

The makes of cylinders selling at the start of 1905, were Columbia, Duval, Edison, Edison Bell, Empress, Excelsior, Imperial, Lambert, Multiphone (Grand Concert), New Falcon, Noble, Pathé, Star and Britannia (who published their last list in February), and the International Indestructible Records (which had their last mention in May 1905).

During the previous year, Columbia Phonograph Company General had begun to construct a record making factory in Bendon Valley, off Garratt Lane, Earlsfield, London E.C. This went into cylinder production in the early summer.

In March 1905, Sterling and Hunter Ltd. changed its name to the **Russell Hunting Record Co. Ltd.** This company, with offices and recording rooms at 81 City Road,

London E.C. and its factory a ten-minute journey away at Cambridge Heath, London E., put the first of its *Sterling Gold Moulded Records* on the market in June 1905. Russell Hunting had been chief of recording at Edison Bell since his arrival in Britain in late 1898, and Sterling had been general manager of The Gramophone and Typewriter Ltd.'s British Zonophone Company. Sterling had organised its first British catalogue, having been seconded from The Gramophone and Typewriter Ltd. He had left the Zonophone business after disagreements with the Gramophone and Typewriter management.

By 2nd January 1905 Symond's London Stores., proprietors of the *Konola, Markona, S.L.S.* cylinders and some makes of phonographs were petitioned into bankruptcy. A liquidator was appointed in June 1905 and a notice of the sale of the company's goods by the liquidator was posted in August. The business had been founded in 1901 by an American, W. E. Scott. He became associated with the Axton phonographs and records and he was part owner of the Electric Records concern after it had been transformed into **British Phonograph Industries Ltd.** in February 1905. This continued the production of Electric Records and British Standard Phonographs.

The Lambert Company Ltd. brought out two new lines for the 1905-1906 season: a six inches long unbreakable record called *Lambert Imperial* and a two-minute "gold moulded" record which they called *The Rex Record*. In November the company ceased releasing any new issues of its Indestructible Records.

Also in November 1905 came the rare phenomenon of a disc company introducing a cylinder line for the first time. This company was Nicole Frères, which introduced *Nicole New Champion Cylinder Records*, manufactured by the Nicole Record Co. Ltd.



There was a further change in a company's name when the Modern Language Press (for whom Pathé had been producing language courses cylinders) became **Lingua-phone Ltd.**, *Linguaphone* having been a registered trade mark belonging to Mrs Rees, together with her husband founder of The Modern Language Press. That too happened in November 1905. Yet another feature of that month was the last published list of Electric Records, the company being in difficulties by that time. A fire in January 1906 ended all hope of a recovery.

There were no major developments in the disc market after the beginning of the 1905-6 season in the Autumn. The first new label to appear that autumn was the *American Odeon Record*. Those discs, made of a blue material, were 27cm (10<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub>" ) in diameter and double-sided recorded. Although the same size as the larger Berlin Odeon Records, they were probably pressed in the U.S.A., unless the blue mix formula had been sent to Berlin for the European disc manufacture. In America, the label style was the name of the company itself - **The American Record Company** - but they were advertised and sold as *Indian Records* because of the colourful label depicting a Red Indian with a gramophone. The label was the same in Europe, but with the addition of the Paris Odeon cupola trade mark, common to the standard Odeon labels. The American record Company discs had Hawthorne, Sheble and Prescott as proprietors, Prescott being J. O. Prescott, the general manager of the company. He was the brother of F. M. Prescott, the founder in Berlin of The International Talking Machine Co.m.b.H with its Odeon Records. The records were sold in Britain through the Odeon Disc Record Co. (C. and J. Ullman of London). These records were advertised as *Blue Odeon Duplex Records* priced at 5s. each. They were sold with their American Record Company catalogue numbers, which differed on each face.

[American Odeon Record 031126 was played - The Regimental Band of the Republic in *The Finale of the Overture from William Tell.*]

The first suggestions that the disc records of the Italian company Società Italiana di Fonotipia would be soon available in Britain were made in October 1905. The predictions were fulfilled in the last week of November 1905. The discs were of 27cm diameter and double-sided recorded, although the first discs (recorded in late 1904) had been single-sided in Italy. The pressing of the discs were undertaken by Prescott's Weissensee Odeon works in Germany with the Fonotipia company becoming agents for Odeon Records in Italy. (I have an Italian Odeon record which also includes Fonotipia in its name style.) The Fonotipia agents in Britain were C. and J. Ullman of London. Both Fonotipia and Odeon discs were made in a 12" size, double-sided recorded and a 35cm (13<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub>" ) size, single-sided recorded. There were also a few 19cm (7<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>" ) Fonotipias.

[Jan Kubelik, violin performing Drdla's *Souvenir* on Fonotipia 39162 was played at Neasden.]

November 1905 brought another new make of record to Britain. This was the *Beka Record* in various sizes from **Bumb and Koenig's Beka Records** of Germany. They had begun in Germany making a 20<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>cm (8") single-sided record, made from American Records material, in the Spring of 1904.

Bumb and Koenig had been the first to import Zonophones into Germany in 1901. They formed a sub-division of their business, Zonophon Company G.m.b.H. after they became German agents for the International Zonophone Co. When Gramophone and Typewriter Ltd. purchased the Zonophone business in June 1903, Bumb and Koenig did not become an agency for Prescott's new Odeon Records, but decided to form their own disc business. The same



month Bumb and Koenig founded **Beka Record G.m.b.H.** A European, North African and Asian recording tour had already been undertaken before the records arrived in Britain, and future British recording ventures were announced as early as July. The Beka experts in fact arrived in Britain in September 1905.

**Otto Ruhl**, of Red Cross Street in the City of London, was the appointed London Agent and *Beka Records* of 8" size, *Beka Grand Records* of 10" size and *Beka Sinfonie Records* of 11" size could be had in either single-sided or double-sided recorded formats. Additionally there was an 8" unbreakable disc record called the *Auto Record* to sell at 6d. In 1906 new recordings of the *Beka Record* were reduced from 8" to 7" in size.

Beka Records were the first of the truly German owned businesses manufacturing discs to invade the British market. They

were the forerunners of the German talking machine industry which played such an important rôle in enlarging the British market. By the time the Great War broke out in 1914 it was the strongest force within the market.

Nicole Frères, besides introducing its *Champion* cylinders in 1905, also published its first catalogue of double-sided recorded *Nicole Records*, in both sizes. They gave the discs red and black paper labels in contrast to the silver paint printed directly on the discs, as used in their first issues and their new single-face recorded issues. Both sizes of discs were given D prefixed catalogue numbers but in two different numerical series.

[No example of a Nicole was played at Neasden.]

**To be continued**

## DISCOGRAPHICAL and BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION SOUGHT

for forthcoming book on commercially-recorded Scottish melodeon players Peter and Daniel Wyper, James Brown, A. J. Scott, William Hannah, Peter Leatham, George 'Pamby' Dick, Fred and W. F. Cameron, Jack Williams. Extensive discographies already compiled, but looking particularly for details of Wyper's Empress cylinders; Indian Zonophone Z series, Grammavox, Symphony, DaCapo, Rexophone, Bouwmeester Scala, and any obscure foreign labels; good quality photocopy of 1921 Regal Scottish supplement cover featuring Peter Wyper, or any other photographic images; and to hearing of any biographical material on Scott and Williams.

If you can help in any way please contact Keith Chandler, Windrush Cottage, South Leigh, OX8 6XN. Tel: [REDACTED] All replies gratefully acknowledged.

## MELODEON GREATS

Seminal 1978 album of pre-1920 sides featuring Scottish melodeon players has been reprogrammed and newly remastered for CD release. Twenty-five classic tracks, with a sixteen-page booklet filled with accurate biographical and discographical information, plus many previously unpublished photographs. Due from **Topic Records** early in 1995.



## THE PATHÉGRAPHE by Mike Field

Circa 1913 the Pathé Company offered a machine for sale which can claim to be the world's first audio visual system. It was intended for use in the teaching of a foreign language and, according to a French publication, for learning the 'Solfège' (Tonic-sol-fa). Although there were no records or language paper strips with the machine shown here, it is reasonable to assume that the position of words or phrases printed on the strip were synchronised with a spoken version on the record for language study. For the study of music the notes of the music scale as shown on the strip in Fig.1 might have been synchronised with the voice of a competent singer or with notes played on an instrument.

Fig.1 shows an overall view of the mechanism drawer which was, in this example, fitted in the

top section of a console cabinet. Table models were also offered presumably incorporating the same base mechanism. The motor is a standard heavy-duty Pathé with the characteristic assisted start found on many Pathé machines. The knob marked "Mise en Marche" is pulled fully outwards and then pushed in again smartly. The linkage can be seen connecting the rod to a gear quadrant which acts on the gear on the turntable shaft to give initial rotation. There is an integral clutch which automatically engages the quadrant with the gear when pressure is applied and disengages when the assisted start is over. The reproducer is a standard hill-and-dale type while the sound-amplifying method is a small horn at the end of the tone arm feeding into a bowl reflector. Such "horn and bowl" systems were

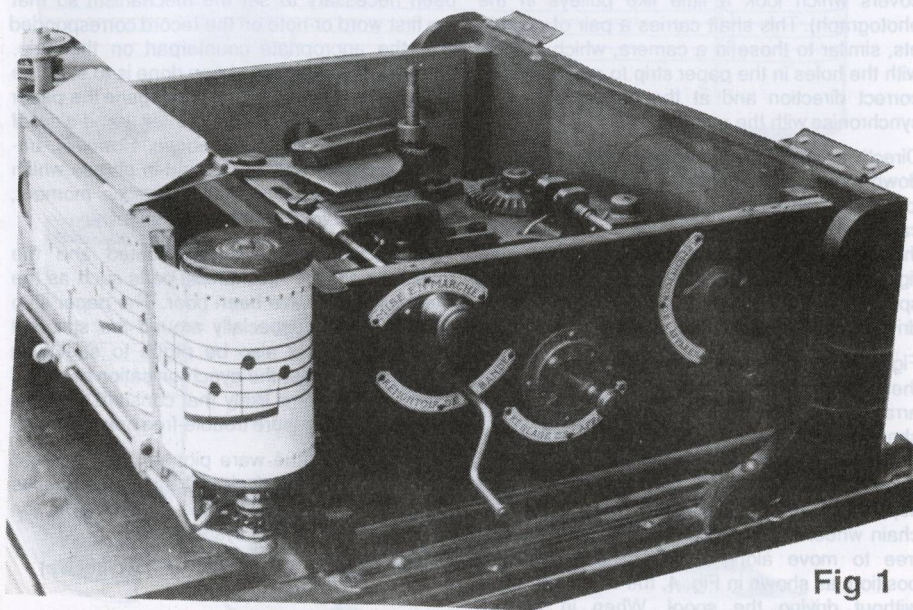


Fig 1



commonly used by Pathé while the "Trench" Decca portable is another example.

The other controls at the side are the speed control ("Réglage de L'Appareil") the position for the winding handle ("Remontoir de L'Appareil") and a handle for rewinding the paper strip ("Remontoir de Bande").

Fig.2 shows a view of the left hand side of the mechanism. A shaft driven from the gear on the spring barrel drives a horizontal shaft through a pair of bevel gears to provide the drive for the paper strip. The drive can be disengaged by a lever on the cabinet side (not shown) which lifts up the spur gear in mesh with the gear on the spring barrel to disengage it from the bevel gear. Another pair of bevel gears at the other end of the horizontal shaft provides the drive to the vertical sprocket shaft driving the paper strip.

Fig.3 shows the front of the mechanism. The bevel gears drive the middle shaft of the three at the left hand side. This in turn drives the shaft on the right of the three through a pair of gears at the top (the gears are housed in two protective covers which look a little like pulleys in the photograph). This shaft carries a pair of sprockets, similar to those in a camera, which engage with the holes in the paper strip to move it in the correct direction and at the correct speed to synchronise with the record.

Directly in front of the sprocket shaft is a hinge-down gate to enable the paper strip to be loaded. When loaded in position by the spring catch at the top, the paper is pressed against the teeth of the sprocket. The strip moves from right to left in operation and is wound on to the spool seen at the extreme left by means of a belt drive from the sprocket shaft.

Fig. 4 shows a view of the right hand side where the principal item of interest is the rewinding arrangement. The rewinding handle engages the shaft at the centre of the large bevel which drives the vertical shaft through a smaller bevel gear. This shaft is connected to the shaft supporting the spool by means of a chain. The chain wheel at the bottom of the spool shaft is free to move along the shaft. In the down position, as shown in Fig. 4, the chain will rotate without driving the spool. When in the up position, mating teeth on the top of the chain

wheel and at the bottom of a collar fixed to the pulley shaft are engaged.

A method of engaging the clutch and disconnecting the paper strip from the sprockets is provided by the long thin horizontal rod shown at the bottom of Fig. 3. This rod is secured to the bottom of the gate latching the paper strip in position. When the gate is pulled down it not only disengages the sprockets but also, by rotating the rod, pushes the chain wheel to engage the clutch of the rewind mechanism.

While the machine's use as an aid to language study is a reasonable proposition, it is more difficult to see the benefit in its use to teach budding singers. The problems of correct pitch are quite formidable. It would have been essential to set the speed of the motor to match exactly the speed of the recording machine which is not an easy task. In addition the machine would need to be maintained in top condition to minimise short and long term variations in speed and therefore pitch.

Each time the machine was used it would have been necessary to set the mechanism so that the first word or note on the record corresponded with the appropriate counterpart on the strip. One way this may have been done is to start the record and at the correct point engage the paper strip drive by the lever at the left hand side of the cabinet as described above. However, unless the record had some lead-in phrase which permitted engagement at the precise moment, the operation would not have been easy.

The machine itself is complicated and the reliability of some mechanical parts such as the clutches might have been poor. The paper strip is fairly fragile, especially around the sprocket holes, and would also be prone to stretching which would upset the synchronisation of sound and sight. It seems likely that constant attention was needed to ensure trouble-free operation.

Nevertheless Pathé were pioneers in the audio visual field with the design of this machine. The viability of the basic idea can be seen from the proliferation of modern systems.

{Photographs by courtesy of the EMI Archive}

Records early in 1995.



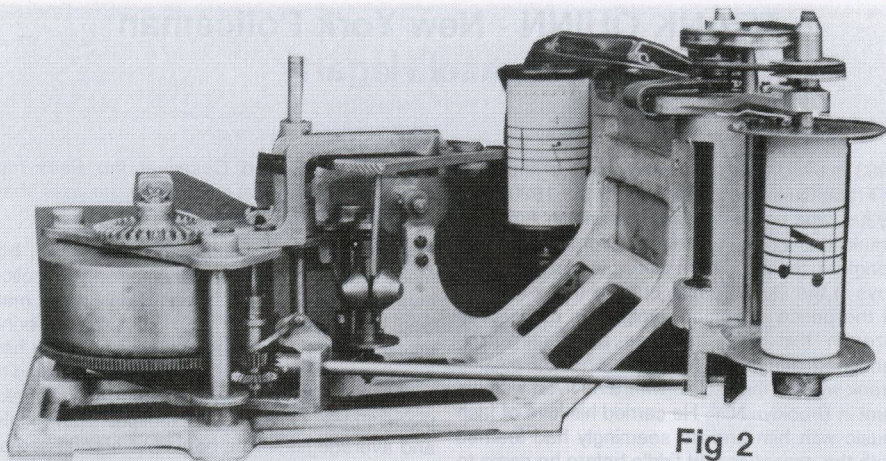


Fig 2

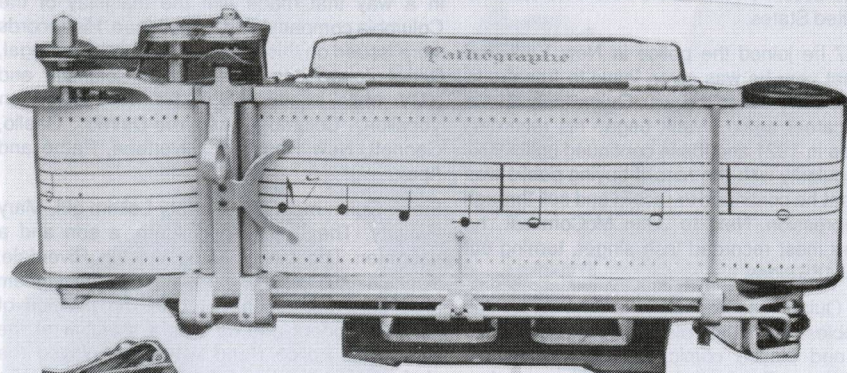


Fig 3

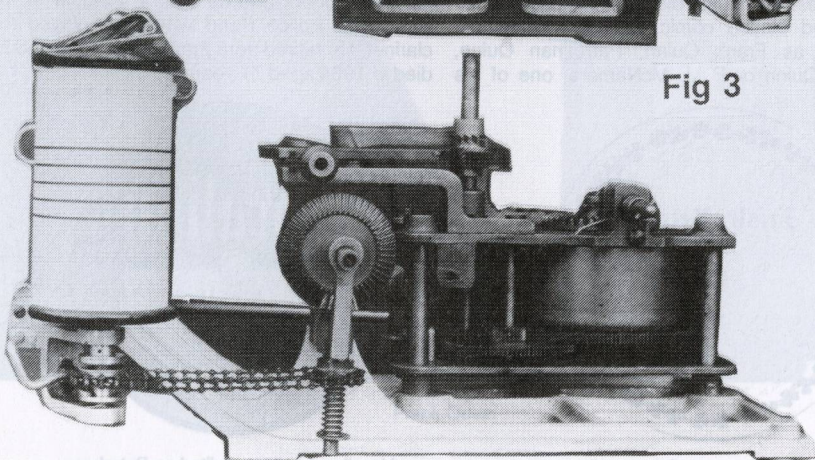


Fig 4



# FRANK QUINN - New York Policeman

## by Michael Hegarty

1993 marked the 100th anniversary of the birth of Frank Quinn, recording star of the 1920s and 1930s, who performed Irish material in America. Frank was born in Greagh, Dromlish, County Longford, Ireland. There were five girls and two boys in the Quinn family, but like many families of the period in Ireland, emigration reduced its size; in this case just one boy and a girl remained at home. When he finished school, Frank went to the U.S.A. where he lived with his aunt in Brooklyn N.Y. He carried his love of Irish music with him and he seemingly had learned both the accordion and fiddle before he came to the United States.

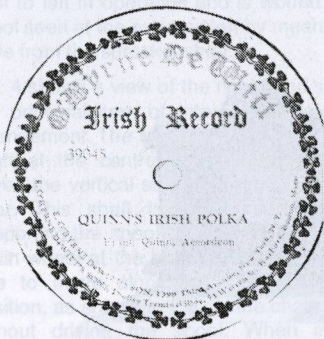
In 1917 he joined the police in New York and later that year he was given leave to transfer to the U.S. navy. After the war Quinn took up his police career again. Frank began his recording activities in 1921 and these continued until 1936. His popularity with the record-buying public was such that he continued to record and sell through the depression. Next to John McCormack, he was the most recorded Irish singer, turning out at least 185 sides.

Frank Quinn recorded alone and with various ensembles. He sang, played the accordion or violin and played comic skits and sketches. Labelled as Frank Quinn, Patrolman Quinn, Francis Quinn or P. J. McNamara, one of his

earliest pieces titled *Casey at the Party* has Frank playing the accordion for no less than Russell Hunting!

Frank Quinn was purely a recording artist, but made the occasional appearance at police benefit shows. He was a quite easy-going man who liked to stay at home. His records bring across a lively character of great ability. He had a large store of Irish material to draw from and to each piece he put in his own variations to make them 'Frank Quinn'. An excellent accordionist and average fiddler he could put a song across in a way that made him the mainstay of the Columbia company's Irish catalogue. His records were issued on this side of the Atlantic on Regal, Regal Zonophone, Parlophone, Columbia and HMV while in the U.S.A. he was issued on Vocalion, Columbia, O'Byrne-DeWitt, Gaelio, Gennett, New Republic, Silvertone, Pathé and Apex.

Frank Quinn married a County Leitrim girl, Mary Rafferty. They had two children, a son and a daughter. The family home was in Riverdale, Yonkers. His original beat was in the Harlem area but he was promoted to the position of police chauffeur and he was a member of the New York Police Band where he played the clarinet. He retired from the force in 1946 and he died in 1964 aged 71 years.



O'Byrne DeWitt - one of the smaller companies who issued Irish material



Vocalion A14541 credited as Patrolman Frank Quinn





Frank Quinn

Letter to Arthur Cotton from the Duke of York



# WAS GEORGE VI A GRAMOPHONE BUFF?

by Joe Pengelly

I've received news of handwritten personal letters from the 1920s by the Duke of York, as he then was, in which he expresses his interest in the Repeating Gramophones company of 102, New Bond Street, London. These are letters sent from Buckingham Palace to an Arthur Cotten, inventor of the *Three Muses* gramophone. Christopher Proudfoot makes reference to this machine on page 88 of his book *Collecting Phonographs and Gramophones*. Of the repeating mechanism used with the machine *The Gramophone* of June 1924 said "it is the only one I have yet seen that functions properly and does not damage the record".

*The Gramophone* of August 1925 further describes an electrical gramophone exhibited by the company which gave "great volume and fidelity to records from loudspeakers functioning at any required distance from the gramophone" - and at the then astronomical price of 250 guineas! Only suitable perhaps for a palace. Frank Andrews tells me there were a number of devices in the 1920s to provide continuous music for dancing without having to manually put a needle back into a start groove of a 78. Was the Duke perhaps a keen *thé dansant* man?

The personal relationship between the Duke and Arthur Cotten is perhaps underlined by the title of *Princess Mary* given to a *Three Muses* mahogany machine priced at 30 guineas. Such a title, that of the Duke's sister, would surely not have been allowed without a special permission.

Who knows of Arthur Cotten and who was close enough to the Duke to give him a a cigarette box as a wedding present and to receive a personal thank-you letter from the Duke for it? Also, who can supply an illustration of a repeating Gramophone, and better still, who has one? I am curious to know and so is the owner of the letters.





Buckingham Palace

S.W.

March 30<sup>th</sup> 1923

Dear Cotton,

Just a line

to thank you so very much  
for your wedding present  
to me of the cigarette box.

It will be so useful to  
me.

The gramophone arrived  
safely on Wednesday.

Yours sincerely

*Albert*

Letter to Arthur Cotton from the Duke of York



# FORTY YEARS OF VICTOR RECORD SALES

## by George Taylor

In connection with a court action in 1943, RCA produced a table of Victor record sales from the start of operations in 1901 to 1941 (and half of 1942). This table is reproduced in Michael W. Sherman's booklet on Victor record labels *The Paper Dog* and is reprinted here.

The table is most instructive in revealing the ups and downs of the Victor record business, presumably mostly, or perhaps entirely, in the USA. The records are divided into Red Seal, Black Label, Bluebird and miscellaneous categories. At the risk of oversimplification, we may take the Red Seal as classical music, Black Label as popular, and Bluebird as popular and inexpensive. The miscellaneous group are, generally speaking, a small proportion of the total.

How do the two categories, classical and popular, fare over the years? Sales of both groups seem to go more or less in step, although the ratio of classical to popular varies somewhat. I am rather surprised at how high the proportion of classical sales could be. It was generally at 15 to 20 percent of the total and, in 1941, Red Seal sales almost equalled Black Label (with Bluebird being somewhat higher than either).

A striking feature of the table is how dizzy the heights and profound the depths of sales were. After start of business, sales peaked in 1907 at nearly eight million, but had fallen to less than five million in 1909. I wonder why? The rise of Columbia? The temporary exhaustion of novelty? Anyway, sales took off again, climbing steeply to nearly 28 million in 1917. Total sales faltered in 1918, probably due to the U.S.A.'s entry into World War I and a shortage of shellac. But by 1921, sales had rocketed to nearly 55 million, of which Red Seal accounted for over 12 million. But then sales rapidly declined to 1925, when only 25 million records were sold. Why was this? The growth of radio? More competition? In any event, there was a further surge of business, peaking in 1927 and 1928 with nearly 38 million records sold in each of these years.

1929 was the year of the stock market crash but record sales held up quite well. But the early 1930s were disastrous. The low occurred in 1932 with little more than three million records sold, only about five percent of the sales of 1921! It really looks as though record sales were a volatile thermometer of the state of the economy. Sales were lower than in 1905 when business had hardly started! To try to revive their fortunes, Victor introduced the Bluebird label in 1933. By 1939 it was outselling the Red Seal and Black Label categories - but anyway, by then business was booming again, and in 1941, sales at 56 million finally caught up with those of the great year of 1921.

We have seen that total record sales declined after 1921 and climbed again in the late 1920s. However, Red Seal sales declined steadily from peak sales of over 12 million in 1921 to a miserable 257,347 in 1933. It seems that the boom years of late 1920s were a boom only in popular record sales. Was this due to the introduction of electrical recording in 1925 (when sales were at one of their minima)? One might have thought that the new process would favour Red Seal sales, particularly if their purchasers also bought the new Orthophonic Victorolas.

And why the sudden jump in Red Seal sales from 5.8 million in 1940 to over 15 million in 1941, when total record sales increased from only (!) 35.6 million to 56.3 million? The trend seemed to be maintained in 1942, with seven million Red Seal records being sold in the first half of the year, but the total sales for the same period were about 40 million. The proportion of Red Seal records fell, perhaps because of the onset of war, and a demand for less serious music. If so, it was different in the first war, when Red Seal sales were 4.3 million records in 1917 (total 27.8 million) and 5.8 million in 1918 (total 21.5 million).

There seems to be rich material here for some sociological PhD student also interested in old records!

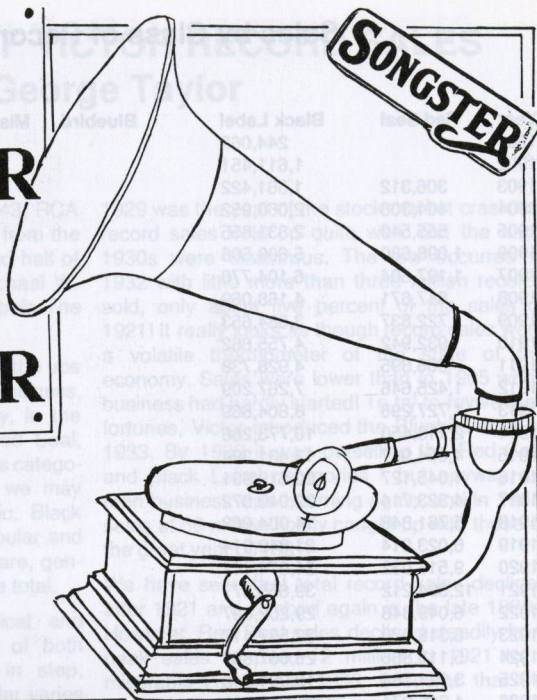


## Sales by Class of Record 1901-1941

Year	Red Seal	Black Label	Bluebird	Miscellaneous	Total
1901		244,063		12,845	256,908
1902		1,611,451		84,845	1,696,296
1903	306,312	1,561,422		98,302	1,966,036
1904	404,308	2,060,952		129,751	2,595,011
1905	555,540	2,831,855		178,284	3,565,679
1906	1,098,680	5,600,506		352,589	7,051,775
1907	1,197,604	6,104,770		384,335	7,686,709
1908	817,671	4,168,069		262,407	5,248,147
1909	722,837	3,684,653		231,973	4,639,463
1910	932,942	4,755,662		299,400	5,988,004
1911	966,895	4,928,738		310,296	6,205,929
1912	1,425,646	7,267,209		457,519	9,150,374
1913	1,727,296	8,804,869		554,324	11,086,489
1914	2,113,450	10,773,286		678,249	13,564,985
1915	4,054,947	13,431,394		1,162,688	18,649,029
1916	4,045,127	20,619,981		1,298,164	25,963,272
1917	4,323,714	22,040,072		1,387,568	27,751,354
1918	5,761,848	14,004,062		1,781,137	21,547,047
1919	6,023,014	21,842,914		2,985,599	30,851,527
1920	9,516,032	24,074,141		1,836,402	35,426,575
1921	12,394,212	39,655,577		2,871,066	54,920,855
1922	6,049,348	29,202,897		1,910,472	37,162,717
1923	6,318,070	32,527,417		1,696,993	40,542,480
1924	5,113,866	26,067,863		1,641,144	32,822,873
1925	3,921,784	19,991,240		1,258,580	25,171,604
1926	4,965,971	25,313,968		1,593,681	31,873,620
1927	2,984,501	34,234,937		405,991	37,625,429
1928	2,921,414	32,234,937		2,166,474	37,764,906
1929	2,060,666	27,798,769		4,634,012	34,493,447
1930	1,245,350	15,363,999		1,101,171	17,710,520
1931	544,044	6,117,241		432,632	7,093,917
1932	305,876	2,465,013		348,160	3,119,049
1933	257,347	1,648,214	678,469	1,051,683	3,635,713
1934	368,509	1,679,233	1,287,287	592,145	4,751,219
1935	570,679	2,363,108	1,225,287	592,145	4,751,219
1936	865,770	3,519,695	2,691,720	599,341	7,676,526
1937	1,303,678	4,117,917	3,868,707	1,204,308	10,494,610
1938	2,207,453	5,850,592	4,454,000	693,321	13,205,366
1939	3,504,365	9,447,474	10,575,158	721,792	24,248,789
1940	5,778,273	13,948,330	14,096,089	1,735,795	35,558,487
1941	15,052,727	16,194,507	23,409,916	1,611,283	56,268,433
7 July					
1942	7,008,884	11,076,464	17,410,691	470,688	35,966,727



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Brushes are shipped postage free with **CLEANER**, otherwise add \$3.00.

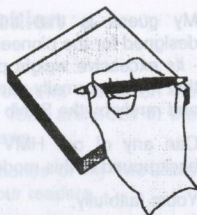
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## LETTERS



### What are they?

Dear Sir,

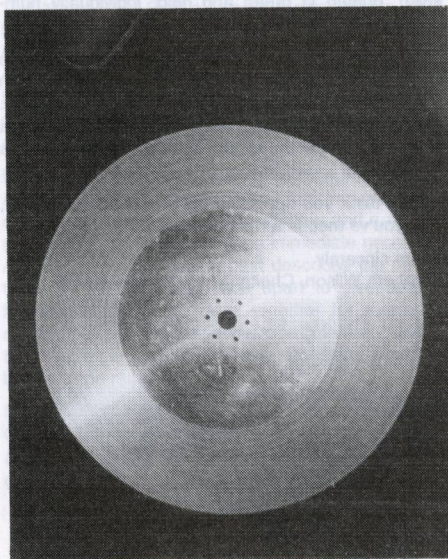
A considerable number of years ago I bought, at a local cattle mart sale, a box intriguingly called *Electrical Sundries*. In addition to these items I was particularly interested in a quantity of high insulation equipment, a high voltage generator and a number of plastic discs. Never having seen their like, I made countless enquiries as to what they were, without success.

The recent letter (*Hillandale News* 196, February 1994) from Don Taylor of Tasmania rekindled my latent curiosity, hence this letter. There are in all seven discs with tracks and a considerable number of blank discs. The diameter is 15", track width is  $\frac{1}{4}$ " and there are 43 tracks. I enclose a picture of one of these discs. (Sorry about the inclusion of my feet!)

Can anyone identify these discs for me? My telephone number is Banchory [redacted]

Yours faithfully,

P. S. Smith, Banchory, Kincardineshire



### Waltzing Matilda

Dear Chris,

*Waltzing Matilda*, Australia's best known song will be one hundred years old in 1995.

To help celebrate the centenary I am preparing a discography of the composition and wish to invite my fellow members to come a-researching with me.

The earliest recording of *Waltzing Matilda* appears to be by John Collinson, an Australian tenor, made in London in 1927 for the Vocalion Company. More than 400 recorded performances have since been made.

If readers know of any other early or unusual recordings I would welcome such information.

I am also documenting recordings of *Thou Bonnie Wood O' Craigielea*, upon which the melody of *Waltzing Matilda* is claimed to be based.

Versions I have traced include one by Anne Ballantyne on Parlophone E 3307 (c.1927) and another by Maggie Robertson on Columbia 1584 (c.1911). Do any other such recordings exist?

My research would benefit enormously if I could obtain copies of any early recordings of *Thou Bonnie Wood O' Craigielea*. I am happy to buy such discs and would be delighted to hear from anyone who can assist me.

The *Waltzing* discography will be published next year and all contributors will be properly acknowledged.

Yours sincerely,

Peter Burgis, [redacted] Port Macquarie, NSW  
2444, Australia

### Linguaphone gramophone

Dear Editor,

Some months ago I acquired a Linguaphone portable gramophone which came complete with a repeat attachment. Since then, I have been trying to fathom out how this attachment works.

It consists of a lever assembly which is operated by a remote cable, the assembly being free to travel along a bar which fits onto the side of the gramophone case. The obvious intention is to lift the sound-box clear of the record by operation of the cable and then to slide the sound-box back to the required position for replay of a section. However, I cannot see how this is actually done. Can any reader help?

Yours sincerely,

Tony Voysey, Dursley, Gloucestershire



## Ruth Vincent

Dear Chris,

Peter Cliffe, in his article on Ruth Vincent in the August issue, says he has been unable to discover the date of her death. According to the recently-published *Encyclopædia of the Musical Theatre* by Kurt Gänzl, she died in London on 8th July 1955.

Gänzl's *Encyclopædia* in two volumes (published by Blackwell) is a most comprehensive work, beautifully printed and clearly set out on high quality paper. I strongly recommend it to anyone interested in musical theatre.

Yours sincerely,  
Barry Badham, Pymble, NSW, Australia

## Mrs Vera Harris

Dear Chris,

I write to inform you of the death of Mrs Vera Harris, daughter of Billy Whitlock, on 7th October 1994.

She was born into a show business family, her mother an opera singer and her father being a composer of songs, bell soloist etc. and early recording artist. Vera first appeared on the stage at the age of six and continued in show business throughout her life, being president of the Sussex Music Hall Society until her death.

She also worked at the Edison Bell factory from 1915 until the late 1920s and provided an enormous amount of inside information to myself regarding the industry at that time. Always a bright and happy person she will be sadly missed.

Best wishes,  
Dave Homewood, Eastbourne, East Sussex

## HMV No. 114c portable

Sir,

I recently restored an HMV No.114c portable model and found it a somewhat unusual machine.

The outer dimensions of the case were larger than the usual HMV portable, and the case was constructed of solid mahogany (no plywood, no leatherette here). Most surprising of all was its massive Type 32 motor, making it the heaviest portable I have so far encountered. The turntable was a normal HMV with autobrake and the tone arm had a 5b sound-box.

My guess is that this 'heavy duty' model was designed for the pioneers and planters of the Empire - its excessive weight possibly explained by the fact that it was normally carried by a 'bearer' or servant - and rarely by the Sahib himself.

Can any of our HMV experts kindly give us the background to this model?

Yours faithfully,  
A. L. Hammond, St.Davids, Dyfed  
{Over to you, Christopher Proudfoot. Ed.}

## Phonecard Collecting

Dear Chris,

You may know that Phonecard collecting is an extremely fast growing hobby throughout the world. I am writing to you as I thought you might like to include in *Hillandale News* something about the first BT card to feature gramophones.

The first card features Madame Hendren the US 1930s phonograph doll, with two small tin-plate toy machines of the 1920s and some small discs. The second card, out next year, will show a c.1895 Berliner model and a Pathé phonograph c.1903 and some cylinders. The last in the series will feature Nipper and an American Columbia AJ phonograph of 1903.

Each card is limited to 500 and comes in a beautifully presented and informative folder in cream 'woven' finish, printed in green and gold, individually numbered and entitled *Sounds from a Golden Age*.

The cards are sold through an exclusive dealership and enquiries for this card are handled by Julie on 0242-242553. The cost of the first card is £8.50 (inc. folder) and orders for multiple sets may attract a discount. I know cards are already changing hands for £12.

I don't think you know me but my husband Trevor, who you've met, is a member of C.L.P.G.S.

Yours sincerely,  
Elizabeth Wilson, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire





## British Empire Exhibition

Dear Chris,

I was enchanted by Frank Andrews' article on the British Empire Exhibitions of 1924 and 1925 in the October issue of *Hillandale News*.

The following are some memories of my two visits which might be of interest to our readers.

I joined a 'Factory Outing' and travelled by train on the old London and North Western Railway main line (recently renamed London Midland and Scottish Railway in 1923) to Wembley Station. There were still some green fields on the way to the Exhibition but the walk was dominated by a large airship displaying the Daily Mail logo, tethered at the entrance.

How I wish I had bought an illustrated catalogue showing those wonderful buildings; Canada, Australia, India, South Africa and smaller colonies. All were characteristic of their native architecture and proudly displayed their products.

Wafts of strange scents, spices and incense assaulted the senses. I always wanted to see 'the wheels go round' and found the Palace of Engineering marvellous. There were huge steam locomotives built in Britain to cross plains and deserts and passenger coaches designed to cope with the extremes of temperature in the many countries they were to serve in.

I have to disagree with Frank Andrews on two points. The *Never Stop Railway* was a feature of the 1925 Exhibition and the 'Instant Photos' would have been Ferrotypes or Tintypes (a white image on a black enamel tinplate). Daguerrotype photos became obsolete with the use of glass plates before 1900. They were an image on silverplated copper, developed by mercury fumes over a spirit lamp.

My second visit was in 1925; while on a visit with my Aunt and Uncle in Kentish Town I took two schoolboy cousins to Wembley Exhibition Station and a ride on the *Never Stop Railway* was an immediate necessity. A phonograph feed screw best describes the operation, the threads being wide apart to give speeds between stations and close together for a walking speed to alight, the passenger coach taking place of the reproducer arm and half-nut. The spiral would be between the rails.

Since my schooldays I had patronised the Silent Cinema, and there before us were signs advertising *De Forest Phonofilms* and *Talking Pictures*; so of course they had to be seen and heard.

The show lasted for about 45 minutes and consisted of several shorts featuring well-known variety turns, one I believe was Lupino Lane or Stanley Lupino playing a banjo, another featured Irish songs. The system was sound-track on film (variable density, I believe). Later on came variable area track, which continues today. Sound was very good (better than the Warner Bros. Vitaphone synchronised disc system which changed the cinema world three years later with *Jazz Singer* and *Singing Fool*). Those were the days.

Of course there had been earlier attempts at talking pictures. Warwick Cinephone Films made 8, 9 and 10 films in successive months in 1909 using gramophone records. Has anyone any further information? Edison Kinetophone toured the cinemas in 1914 with a programme of 16 short films, each synchronised to a phonograph cylinder.

I only caught the gramophone/phonograph bug about 12 years ago, although my brother had a Graves gramophone in 1913 and a friend had a phonograph a few years later.

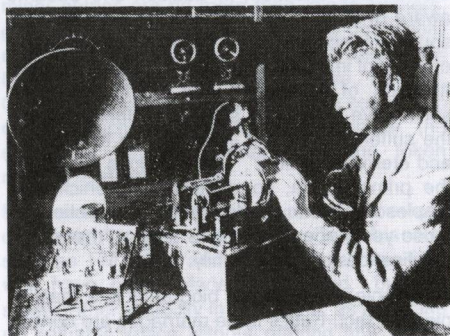
Kind regards,  
Arthur J. George A.R.P.S., Rushden, Northants.

## Another Edison First?

Dear Chris,

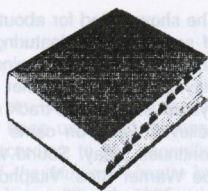
I thought that you might be interested in the enclosed photocopy. As you can see it shows that John Logie Baird used a concert phonograph for his first television records. I was taken aback when I saw it. Is it another first for Thomas Edison?

Sincerely,  
Bill Violen, Holland-on-Sea, Essex





## REVIEWS



### Adelina Patti - Queen of Hearts by John Frederick Cone

It is a rare and genuine pleasure to discover so excellent a biography as this, which will surely be treasured by the specialist musical historian, while also exerting a considerable appeal to the general reader. Eschewing the all too familiar farrago of facile gossip, pseudo-psychological speculation and the reworking of stale and inaccurate anecdote which so frequently masquerades as a 'life' in these degenerate days, Mr Cone has instead produced an invaluable piece of finely written scholarship, which paints a vivid portrait of a supreme vocal artist, and by all accounts, of a fascinating and invincibly charming personality, adored alike by her public and personal acquaintances.

The early part of the book, which is concerned with Patti's childhood and youth, is in some ways the most interesting since, until now, little has really been known about this period of her life apart from a few stories of her career as an infant prodigy. Two facts which emerge, however, do much to explain certain traits in Patti's immature character: she seems to have endured a distinctly lonely childhood, and one lacking warmth and affection; in addition she became aware of being exploited by her relatives as a source of income. Patti's love of company, her enjoyment in entertaining and her hunger for the affection of audiences, her friends and her successive husbands, surely had their origin in the suffering of a sad little girl with few friends and eternally 'on tour'. The notorious avarice of the prima donna, so amusingly chronicled by Mapleson, is an understandable reaction to those years spent helping to support the uncertain finances of Patti's family.

The whole of Mr Cone's biography is a masterpiece of tact: Patti's three marriages are considered largely in relation to her musical career which is extensively documented (and summarised in the book's excellent appendices), and it

is safe to say that we learn nothing that Patti herself would have been anxious to conceal. Such fascinating and illuminating sources as contemporary reviews and impressions, letters, memoirs, recorded conversations and interviews are skilfully introduced to support and enhance Mr Cone's narrative, bearing testimony to Patti's professional brilliance as a singer and actress, as well as to her personal beauty, elegance and charm.

One misconception is firmly scotched by this biography, and scotched, one hopes, for good, that Patti was merely a coloratura warbler of the 'peck and tweet' school. Her repertoire, which included such rôles as Leonora, Aida and Valentine, and the critical comments of Verdi, Hanslick, Chorley and Shaw give ample proof of the genuinely dramatic quality of her vocal and interpretative powers, evidence which is further supported by her two series of recordings in 1905 and 1906.

Readers of this magazine will, of course, be familiar with accounts of the famous Fred Gaisberg/Landon Ronald expedition to darkest Wales to record Patti's voice and there will be much to interest them in Mr Cone's narrative of their adventures at Craig-y-Nos, in the detailed discography of William R. Moran, and in the selection of critical comments on the records. One is, for instance, intrigued by the image of Patti being shunted back and forth on a wheeled platform during recording, 'for shading' in the words of her niece, Louise Barili, an experience which doubtless recalled those perilous moments on board the property ship in the first finale of *L'Etoile du Nord*!

Readers are earnestly entreated to tear themselves from such esoteric delights as 'Notes on Recording Speeds' to enjoy the excellent photographs which so enhance the book: many are quite unfamiliar and all most interesting, especially those showing the diva in her various operatic costumes. This book (ISBN 1-85928-004-8) is published **Solar Press** in the U.S.A. and can be obtained in the U.K. from **Talking Machine Review**, 105 Sturdee Avenue, Gillingham, Kent ME7 2HG for **£29.50** plus **10%** postage.

**Stephen Marriott**



## Date About all Those English Seventy-eights Part 1 - commercial by Eddie Shaw

Tradition demands that a reviewer shall treat a submitted work with a combination of welcome and scepticism, with an eye both to the author's intentions and to the readers' interests; to praise the overall scope and quality with as unbridled optimism as honesty will permit; and then (to show that he or she is "on the ball" and has not been fooled all along) to conjure up some favourite errors, point out corrections (for the benefit of Truth and the Good of the Reader) and generally to rise above the whole affair!

In this case, it must be said at the outset that **DATES** (yes, it's a rather nasty acronym) is such a bewildering tapestry of thoroughness and inadequacy, of integrity and naivety, of props and pitfalls, that the present reviewer is thrown "back to basics" in order to untangle the good threads and the bad.

For Eddie Shaw has set himself a most Herculean task: to produce a booklet in which he hopes "to have listed all those records commercially available in retail outlets, the [criterion] being that the records were 'Made in England'." This was brought about by his "desire... to be able to establish approximately when a particular record was released, and thus the age of that record." Readers may remember Eddie's call for information (letters, *Hillandale News* 192, June 1993, p263). As those of you who follow Frank Andrews' extensive researches will realise, even just to *list* all the labels and makes is quite difficult, but to add meaningful hints as to issue date (by catalogue number) is daunting indeed. The dates of *recording* are, of course, quite a different matter - but more of that later.

And so we come to this present listing; first of all, I must describe its physical appearance: in the form submitted, it consists of a bundle of 61 (unnumbered) A4 sides, stapled in one corner and photocopied from the output of one of the lesser dot-matrix printers. This has resulted in notably less than the clearest of type, but at least the listings are well enough laid out, in two columns.

After due acknowledgments to various key helpers, Eddie lists "Reference Works," including

*Hillandale [News]* and other magazines (but not Jack Wrigley's *Historic Record*), various record companies' catalogues (both named CLPGS reprints and unspecified originals), and the essential *World's Encyclopædia of Recorded Music* (WERM) and *Gramophone Shop Encyclopedia of Recorded Music* (GSERM). Significantly, he does not appear to have consulted *The Gramophone* magazine, an omission which he should amend as soon as possible. (And he has slightly misquoted the titles of both WERM and GSERM.) Finally, he asks for more information, and includes a form for the reader to request future *free* updates and notification of the availability of Part 2, which will cover non-commercial issues "available only to the industry of entertainment, or those made privately for other purposes."

Taking at face value the scope of this listing of well over 200 different label names throws up some surprises: BBC discs are mentioned (with virtually no data) - these are hardly commercial issues. Some labels actually listed at the front of WERM are missing (notably National Gramophonic Society - yes, they were for sale latterly - Treasury of Music, Argo and Neglected Masterpieces). Arguably the Paxton, Schott, Curwen, Boosey & Hawkes and Cherubini Society labels should have been included, although these may have been assigned to Part 2. Naturally, there are likely to be some of the many minor early labels to catch up on, too - I noticed that AFMC, Whiteley and Musogram weren't in, but there are several included which I didn't recognise, such as Burlington, Lido and My Record. Many of the minor entries are no more than "place-markers" giving a label name and perhaps only one record number with a date; but it is nice to see useful listings for labels such as Actuelle, Beltona, Octacros, Oriole and Rex. Most early seven-inch records such as Odeon, G&T, Berliner (no details at all) and Zonophone (one token number) are not covered.

More unexpected is the inclusion of *vast* arrays of "foreign" series from HMV, Columbia etc, such as FM, HUX and SCB. These may very well have been "Made in England," but are surely rather a liability in this listing, as they take up valuable space without offering any significant details (or any details at all in some cases).



They can also confuse the reader (no less than 37 different Columbia D series!) and, what is worse, have occasionally also confused the compiler of this work.

Each entry starts with the name of the label, together with the record size in inches (10", 12" etc) and the prefix letter(s) for each record series; then follows a list showing (lowest and) highest known catalogue numbers against year of issue. Extra remarks are shown to the right of the column of years. Although the keys given in each heading are shown in the order <label> <size> <prefix letters>, the main entries are sorted by <label> <prefix letters> <size> thus mixing sizes almost randomly within the various series for any particular label. It might be worth rearranging the overall sorting process so as to match the order of the heading keys, or better, changing the order of the keys to have the size last. No label colours are mentioned - these might be an aid to finding a series quickly in some cases - and the years are specified inconsistently, for instance "1936", or "16-7" (representing 1916-17). There are no cross-references given between several closely related (but well-separated) sets of entries having different names, such as Gramophone/EMI/Zonophone, Pathé/Actuelle or Pye/Nixa, which can be a nuisance.

Now let's have a look some examples of actual entries, to show both good and bad points; first of all, two straightforward and uncomplicated entries:

#### Marathon 10" --

101	193	1912
	381	1913
	459	1914
	473	1915

#### Columbia 12" LX

1	55	1929 UK; new series
	132	1930
	178	1931
	264	1932
	345	1933

This shows that the 10-inch Marathon discs have no prefix (indicated as "--"), and the 12-inch Columbia discs are the well-known LX series. The interested enquirer can thus discover that Marathon 432 would have been a 10-inch disc probably issued in 1914, or check that Columbia

LX123 was issued in 1930. Now for something a little more complicated:

#### H.M.V. 12" D

1	17	pre25 UK
	88	pre36
	100	1913
	176	pre25
	177	1915

Here, there are three types of date given: "pre25" obviously refers to the "acoustic" recording period, "pre36" will have arisen from some entry in GSERM (1936 edition), and the other dates shown here are - well, certainly not issue dates! While this example has thrown up a clear contradiction to the stated aim of the list, it also shows that Eddie (quite rightly) is not prepared to guess at dates for which he does not have documentary evidence: this really must be stressed as a plus point, however strange the results appear at this stage in his research.

Another example of this apparently capricious type of detail is demonstrated by the short Capitol 12-inch classical music series CK51001-4: the listing gives the date as "37-50", which seems eccentric until you know that the discs appear in the first edition of Sackville-West and Shawe-Taylor's *The Record Guide* (which includes records up to December 1950) and that they start with Bartók's *Music for Strings, Percussion and Celesta*, first performed in 1937. This may be regarded as another instance of honest reporting - no random interpolations for Eddie Shaw!

Lastly, some nasty knots extracted from the Decca listings:

Decca 10" A			
?	?	?	UK; France=AF
Decca 12" A			
1002	1004		pre36 Italy
Decca 12" S			
10001	?	?	UK; France=SF

Here Eddie has evidently compiled his information from a misunderstood mixture of entries from the Decca table in WERM. The British A series (A1002 and A1004 only!) were certainly 10-inch (the 12-inch Italian A1000 series is not at all clearly attributed in the WERM table), and the S series were indeed 12-inch. But the French AF and SF series were post-war and



were both 10-inch (as WERM indicates): the addition of F for the first French discs within the British series (as in MF, FF, KF) was not used until 1930, after the original A and S series had been withdrawn. Incidentally, if there really exists a reference somewhere to S10001, I'd like to know what it is! Amongst other Decca oddities to be corrected are the following: the early magenta British T series (starting at T101) has been erroneously related to the (post-war) "London" series in the USA; the important 12-inch X series has been entirely omitted, and an unexpected K1 to K499 has appeared from somewhere.

To conclude this review on an encouraging note, it is worth making some more general recommendations which the compiler of this brave attempt might find useful. Firstly, he really must find some opportunity to peruse the entire relevant run of *The Gramophone*, preferably a set which has the advertisements intact; in my experience, records in those days were generally reviewed about the same month as they were issued or advertised. Another very useful source of catalogue numbers related to years of issue is the long-running series of Peter Copeland's articles in Jack Wrigley's quarterly magazine *Historic Record*. Eddie should reconsider carefully the tables of series numbers given in WERM, and perhaps also consult Francis Clough's articles *The Problem of Record Numbers* about HMV, Columbia, Parlophone, Regal-Zonophone and Decca series (with tables) in *The Gramophone* for 1943 (May pp171-2, June pp16-17, July pp31-2, with important postscript and corrections November pp88-89).

A common problem for the reader when consulting such a listing is to determine the source of any discographical statement - in fact, as I have discovered more than once, even the compiler of such a list may not have any note of the source of a particular detail. I would suggest that, in this case, all the references to other (more complete) sources of information should be listed against each label - detailing other discographies, articles, etc; this and a listing of company catalogues consulted would indicate gaps which could be filled by other interested potential helpers, and so invite further useful data.

Eddie Shaw is clearly an optimist and (as I have indicated) a compiler of some industry and integrity: but, as in all arts, honesty (although necessary) is not sufficient - it's the result that counts. And so, if you are a novice collector and hope for a quick route to dating all your British 78s with ease or precision or accuracy, or indeed if you have poor eyesight, then this "work in progress" is not for you.

If, however, you want to make a quick general check on one of the many minor British labels; if you have good additional resources, such as WERM, GSERM or *The Gramophone*, or if you enjoy a challenge and you have both the time and inclination to help Eddie to continue his mammoth task, then you can regard this publication as some sort of starting-point for further investigation. And that, I would guess, is how the author himself must view the result of his labours so far.

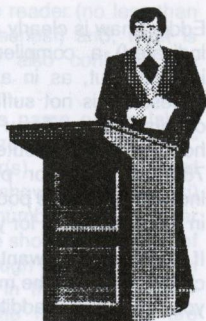
**DATES (Part 1: Commercial)** is available direct from the author Eddie Shaw, [redacted] London EC1Y 8NQ, price £4 including postage and **free updates** when available.

### Peter Adamson

[A similar book, produced in the U.S.A., is *The Almost Complete 78rpm Record Dating Guide* (II) by Steven C. Barr, published in 1992 and distributed by **Yesterday Once Again**, PO Box 6773, Huntingdon Beach, California 92615, tel: +1 (714) 963-2474. This is far from perfect or complete, but it does make an attempt on the British record issues and includes a label dating guide in its 177 pages for **less than \$20**. Ed.]



## REPORTS



### ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Society's Annual General Meeting was held at the Friendship Centre, Bloomsbury Baptist Church, Shaftesbury Avenue, London on Saturday 24th September 1994. In the absence of the Chairman, Peter Martland who was in the U.S.A., the Treasurer, Chris Hamilton took the chair. He said the Society had a successful year and the membership had stabilised at around 700. The *Hillandale News* continued to publish a variety of articles on all aspects of our hobby. An enlarged edition of 48 pages to celebrate the 200th issue was to be published in October. The Booklist had an extremely successful year under Don Moore's management making a profit of £3,047 and Chris expressed the Committee's thanks to Don for his splendid effort. Chris then gave the rest of the Treasurer's report. The Endowment Fund had increased by £316. The Society's Working Fund had increased by £1,045. The Society had made a loss of £1,433 on its Profit and Loss Account. This was largely accounted for by £529 legal costs incurred in the Society's application to become a charity. Chris said that overall the Society's financial position was sound and he recommended that there be no change in the annual subscription. As there was not a quorum at the meeting the Treasurer's report could not be approved; neither could the Officers and Committee be re-elected. The Committee agreed to call an Extraordinary General Meeting to be held just before the monthly London Meeting on 17th November to approve the Treasurer's report and to re-elect the Officers and Committee. Chris read out a report from our solicitor and Committee Member Stephen Gadd on the progress towards limiting the Society's liability and becoming a charity. It is printed here:

"In September of 1992 it was decided by the Committee of the C.L.P.G.S. to investigate the possibility of limiting the liability of the Society and to investigate the possibility of registering the Society for charitable purposes.

On Counsel's advice, application for assessment by the Charity Commissioners was made and subsequently the Charity Commissioners have advised that the Society is eligible for charitable status under the provisions of the Charities Act as a 'Learned Society'.

Accordingly a Memorandum and Articles of Association of the new company have subsequently been drawn up. The provisions have subsequently been agreed by the Committee.

In outline the Society's established object will be the education of the public in the art, science and history of the reproduction of sound.

Authority is now sought from the members of the Society to authorise the Committee to proceed with the incorporation of the new company, *The City of London Phonograph and Gramophone Society Ltd.* in the terms of the draft memorandum and articles of association and to provide for the dissolution of the existing Society and the transfer to the new company of the Society's assets.

A full copy of the draft memorandum and articles of association of the new company is available for members if desired. Please send a stamped addressed envelope to Stephen Gadd c/o Smith Gadd and Co., Solicitors, [redacted] Horsham, West Sussex RH12 1SL and a full copy will be provided by return.

The proposals will be put to the Society members at an EGM on March 16th 1995."

Chris thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting.

A copy of the Society's Balance Sheet for the year 1993/94 is printed on the next page.

C. H.



# CITY OF LONDON PHONOGRAPH AND GRAMOPHONE SOCIETY

Notice of an

## EXTRAORDINARY GENERAL MEETING

to be held in The National Sound Archive, 29 Exhibition Road, South Kensington, London on 16th March 1995 at 6.40pm to pass the following resolutions:

- 1) This meeting agrees to add Rule 8 to the Rules of the Society:  
"The Committee is authorised to proceed with the incorporation of *The City of London Phonograph and Gramophone Society Ltd.* in accordance with the terms of the draft memorandum and articles produced at the EGM held on 16th March 1995."
- 2) This meeting authorises the Committee to provide for the dissolution of the Society and the transfer the Society's assets to the above mentioned company subject to such retentions as the Committee may consider requisite for the purpose of providing for the existing liabilities of the Society and the cost of the transfer.
- 3) This meeting authorises the Committee to register the *The City of London Phonograph and Gramophone Society Ltd.* in accordance with the Company Law requirements and to thereafter seek formal charitable registration from the Charity Commissioners.

## C.L.P.G.S. BALANCE SHEET (YEAR 1/8/93 to 31/7/94)

### Receipts

Bank account balances b/f	14,668.00
<b>Income:</b>	
Subscriptions (Sterling)	7,628.00
Adverts	1,103.00
Book sales	4,917.00
Transfer from US a/c	981.00
Miscellaneous	193.00
Bank Interest	543.00
Phonofair '94	480.00

**Totals £30,513.00**

### Payments

<b>Outgoings:</b>	
H&D Printing	4,913.00
Book purchases & printing	2,255.00
Computer Software & maintenance	344.00
Postage & Stationery	2,945.00
Miscellaneous (incl. insurance & hire of meeting room)	2,100.00
Closing bank account balances	17,956.00

**£30,513.00**

Any member wishing a copy of the full accounts should send a s.a.e (A4 size) to the Hon.Treasurer, [REDACTED] Cupar, Fife KY15 4EP



## London Meeting, June 16th 1994

Bridget Duckenfield gave the Society a programme called *The Many Sides of Sir Landon Ronald*. Authoress of the recently published biography *O Lovely Knight*, she dwelt on the many talents of Sir Landon Ronald, who was born in 1873. His mother was Hannah de Lara and his father Henry Russell (remembered for compositions such as *A Life on the Ocean Wave*). Ronald had a brother called Henry Russell and a half brother, who later became the Revd. Henry Lloyd Russell.

Ronald's mother taught him pianoforte from the age of 4, and he was admitted to the Royal College of Music when he was 18 years old, where he studied composition under Sir Hubert Parry and he played in the college orchestra under Sir Charles Villiers Stanford. Ronald later studied in Frankfurt before returning to London. There he was successful at an audition to play the music for the wordless play *L'Enfant Prodigue* by Wormser. This gave him a salary of £10 per week.

Later he became a répétiteur at Covent Garden where he accompanied artists such as Adelina Patti, Nellie Melba, Enrico Caruso and the de Reszke brothers. When he was engaged to accompany Melba in the rehearsal of her rôle in *Manon* Landon Ronald learned the score overnight and played from memory the following day, impressing Melba. She took him on a tour of America in 1894 as her accompanist. It was also Melba who, in 1896, persuaded the authorities at Covent Garden to allow Ronald to conduct a performance of Gounod's *Faust*. Although he received a good review for this, Ronald decided to restrict himself to conducting smaller productions and it was in 1899, while he was engaged to conduct the orchestra at the Lyric Theatre, Shaftesbury Avenue's production of Leslie Stewart's *Florodora*, that Fred Gaisberg discovered him. That year he recorded for Gaisberg on Berliner Records and soon after he joined The Gramophone Co. as musical adviser, talent scout and accompanist. Ronald is found accompanying Patti, Melba, Ben Davies, Joseph O'Mara and Emma Calvé during the years 1902-6.

In December 1907 Ronald successfully appeared as guest conductor of the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra. This led to appearances in Vienna, Leipzig, Amsterdam and Bremen. Ronald was admired by Nikisch, who invited him, to conduct the Sunday Concerts at the Albert Hall. This led to his conducting his own orchestra (The New Symphony Orchestra) founded by John Saunders, Eli Hudson and Charles Draper. This orchestra recorded exclusively for The

Gramophone Company Ltd. on its HMV label. These recordings convinced Elgar to record his own compositions.

In 1910 Ronald became principal of the Guildhall School of Music (the same year that his recording of the truncated version of Grieg's Piano Concerto was issued on two black labelled discs). In 1911 Ronald's orchestra was re-named The Royal Albert Hall Orchestra in recognition of countless Sunday concerts they had played (incidentally the orchestra reverted back to its old name in 1927). Elgar dedicated his *Falstaff* to Ronald, who premiered the work at the Queen's Hall in November 1913.

From November 1913 to 1919 were depressing times for Landon Ronald as his private life had often surfaced to the public gaze. He was composed the music for Robert Hichen's eastern drama *The Garden of Allah*, which was staged at Drury Lane and recorded by HMV. Another project was the *Music Lover's Portfolio* where in 20 weekly parts piano adaptations of classical and operatic works were presented with modern piano compositions and interviews conducted with British artists (an idea followed by Henry Wood and Percy Pitt).

In 1930 he produced *A Cycle of Life* which was dedicated to Melba and contains one of his most memorable compositions *Down in the Forest*. Bridget Duckenfield enriched her presentation with slide illustrations, taken from her book of family photographs and with recordings of Landon Ronald. The latter included a Berliner of Ronald, records of Ronald accompanying Melba and Joseph O'Mara (in Ronald's own composition *Friend and Lover*) and some private recordings on HMV. The audience were also shown some unpublished letters of Landon Ronald. All this added up to a well-documented and informative account of an excellent musician presented in a way that only a family member could. The Society is indebted to Bridget Duckenfield for allowing them to share this valuable information about a such an important person so intimately connected with the gramophone.

**George Woolford**



## London Meeting, August 18th 1994

Dominic Coombe brought his excellent Edison *Triumph* phonograph, complete with its *Music Master* horn to Exhibition Road for our August meeting.

Dominic demonstrated his theory that Edison and Berliner were, up to 1906, comparable on volume, with Edison winning on clearer sibilances. His programme was entitled *Ragtime Memories* and Dominic commenced with, of course, *Alexander's Ragtime Band* sung by F. Miller (a pseudonym for Stanley Kirkby) on Edison Bell 20309.

We then had three Clarion cylinders (623, 658 and 834) which explored Ragtime, then Edison Bell 20310 *Casey Jones* sung, we believe, by Jack Charman, although Ted Yorke is mentioned in duet with Harry Cove.

Two Edison's followed: 10047 *Black and White Rag*, played by the American Symphony Orchestra and 10570 *Everybody's Doing It Now* sung by the Premier Quartette.

Unfortunately no help was available as to the artists on Edison Bell 20366 *Trail of the Lonesome Pine*, which is an infamous tune forever associated with Mr Laurel and Mr Hardy from those far off monochrome days. The two minute section concluded with Edison 13933 *Mary Took The Calves* where Florrie Forde had the audience in two minds as to what she really said.

When we changed gauges, so to speak, and continued with four minute cylinders we heard eight Edison's: 3476 *Darktown Strutters' Ball* sung by the Premier Quartette, 2197 *Pussy Cat Rag* with Ada Jones, 2194 with Billy Murray singing *Get Out and Get Under* (another well-known tune alluding to the difficulties of romancing and running a motor car simultaneously), Collins and Harlan on Edison 1897 with *Waiting for the Robert E. Lee*, 3242 with A. Vecsey's Orchestra in *Poor Butterfly* (we believe this piece was composed by Raymond Stubble), 1637 with Billy Murray singing *On the Mississippi*, Collins and Harlan with *Hitchy Koo* (this title comes from the show *Hullo Ragtime*) on Edison 1605 and finally *Don't Sing in Ragtime* sung by Billy Merson on Edison 23035.

The audience, however, had not tired of listening to such realistically sounding cylinders and, duly encouraged, Dominic ended his recital with a rare electrically recorded cylinder, Edison 5716 *Kansas City Kitty*. This was revelation indeed and a fine ending to a most enjoyable evening given on a fine Edison phonograph!

**George Woolford**

## London Meeting, September 15th 1994

For our September meeting George Glastris, who informed us that he was a lad local to the home of the *St. Louis Blues* gave us an acoustical programme augmented with three magnificent machines from Dominic Coombe's collection.

We started with an Edison Model B *Triumph* fitted with a *Music Master* horn (all dating from about 1907). The first cylinder *Meet Me in St. Louis* was sung by Billy Murray. This was followed by *Under the Anheuser Bush* (this tune was used by Florrie Forde in her song *The Old Bull and Bush*). Fred van Eps playing *Maple Leaf Rag* on an indestructible cylinder was next followed by Len Spencer, a vaudeville artist, performing *Musical Yankee*. Charles Dabb on the xylophone played *The Gateway City March* on a Blue Amberol alluding to St. Louis before we actually embarked *On The Mississippi* sung by Billy Murray on another Blue Amberol. Eugene Laudas' Society Orchestra played *The Missouri Waltz* (after the state in the centre of the U.S.A.). This allowed George to put on *The Heart of America March* with the New York Military Band. We next heard *Mississippi Cradle* played by the Green Brothers' Novelty Band. George concluded this section with *Roll Along Missouri* played by McNapak's Dance Orchestra.

The audience and George then turned their attention to a belt-driven Edison Diamond Disc table phonograph Model B80, dating from about 1912. We started with the Dennis Sisters singing *St. Louis Gal* on Diamond Disc 52001. Then Vernon Dalhart sang *Lucky Lindy* on 52029. This referred to Charles Lindberg, who was a local boy who took the world by storm after completing a successful crossing of the Atlantic by aeroplane in 1927, landing finally in France. This section concluded with *Ol' Man River* sung by the Rollickers on Diamond Disc 52358.

The third part of George's recital consisted of lateral recordings played on a mahogany-cased Gramophone Company Ltd. *Senior Monarch*, dating from 1908. The first recording in this section was a Parlophone Swing Series re-issue of an earlier Columbia recording of Bessie Smith singing *St. Louis Blues* (the artists Fred Longshore and Duke Ellington were also on this disc). We then heard Fess Williams' Royal Flush Orchestra playing *Ozark Blues* on a Brunswick record. Josephine Baker singing *Voulez-vous de la Canne à Sucre* on a French Columbia came next. Elzadie Robinson followed singing *St. Louis Cyclone Blues* (recorded in Chicago in November 1927). *The Terrible Mississippi Flood* by Arthur Fields on a Grey Gull record reminded listeners of the disasters usually associated with large uncontrolled areas of water. George then



alluded to his meeting with Chuck Berry, a local lad made good over here, and the *Senior Monarch*, complete with *Exhibition* sound-box coped with *Sweet Little Rock* and *Roll* which Eldridge Johnson and Fred Gaisberg could never have anticipated!

Ted Lewis and His Band were to play us out with *The New St. Louis Blues* but such was the enthusiasm displayed by the audience that we were treated to one final cylinder *St. Louis Toodleoo* performed by the Bluebirds Trio. Thus ended a marvellous evening's entertainment by George Glasiris spiced with many interesting anecdotes.

## George Woolford

### London Meeting, October 20th 1994

The London Meetings Vice-Chairman, George Woolford, took the floor and the turntable with a programme called *1905 and Patti*. This year saw some early attempts to put serious music on to record. True, there was a little opera and a lot of light instrumental by this time, but so-called classics came in snatches and it would be several years before multi-sided pieces would be on the market. The early examples were played, each on a 10" side:

Marie Hall (violin with piano accompaniment) - *Finale* from Mendelssohn's *Violin Concerto* and a chamber movement by The London Trio, formed in 1901 by Amina Goodwin, a pupil of Clara Schumann and Liszt.

At this date concert artists were still wary of offers to record their talents by The Gramophone and Typewriter Ltd. and other record companies, and it took patience and flattery to attract Adelina Patti to the recording horn at her Welsh castle in 1905, and in the following year. The matter of her fees seems to be lost but the presentation of Gramophone by Sydney Dixon of The Gramophone and Typewriter Ltd. finally opened the door and from the resulting 1905-6 recordings we listened to:

*Voi Che Sapete* (original label pressing)  
*La Calasera* (HMV Archive Series pressing)  
*Last Rose of Summer* (Special Pressing)  
*Ave Maria* (not issued - false start)  
Kathleen Mavourneen  
*Within a Mile of Edinboro' Town* (Special Pressing)  
*The Enemy Said* from Handel's *Israel in Egypt* (a 1905 G&T), a solo by the overlooked tenor Charles Saunders.

This was a well-prepared programme with insights on domestic and social, as well as musical life in Craig-y-Nos, illustrated by old photographs of the castle, and contemporary musical figures. The series, with two up, has good prospects for the future, and a George Woolford evening should be an annual occasion for a long time to come.

## A London Correspondent

### Midlands Group meeting held at Carr's Lane Methodist Centre, Birmingham on September 17th 1994

A very attractive and unusual portable gramophone was brought to the meeting by Steve Miller. It is called a 'Rondo' and has a brown hide case and an internal wooden horn, very strongly made, and has an adjustable tone control fitted to the sound-box. No one at the meeting had seen such a machine before.

The entertainment for the evening followed our new format with one short programme followed by tea or coffee and then another short programme. Wal Fowler opened the first part with the programme postponed from the previous meeting *Comedy - Things Unusual*.

His first item was an extract from the final (300th) performance of the wartime radio show *Itma*, and all the favourite characters (Funf, Signor So So, Mrs Mop to name a few) were heard talking to Tommy Handley.

We then heard extracts of items by Spike Jones, Hylda Baker, Joyce Grenfell, Sam Mayo, Tommy Cooper and others including a memorable item by Jimmy 'Schnozzle' Durante, Bing Crosby, José Iturbi and Bette Davies in a 1945 victory sketch.

That most entertaining mixture contrasted with the second programme given by our group's Chairman, Eddie Dunn. This consisted of operatic vocals on Pathé discs played on Eddie's own Pathé horn machine. We heard eight of the best singers on Pathé's roster (including some exclusive to them) from the early part of the century. Lucien Muratore (tenor) was heard at the outside *O Paradiso* from Meyerbeer's *L'Africaine*. Other tenors heard were Augusto Scampini, Pierre Dupré and Aureliano Pertile. We also heard some sopranos Celestina Boninsegna, Yvonne Gall and Geneviève Vix. Finally we were treated to Mario Ancona (baritone) singing



*Eri Tu* from Verdi's *Un Ballo in Maschera*. We were privileged to hear such a selection of memorable singers on rare discs.

Very many thanks to Wal and Eddie for an evening of fine entertainment.

**Geoff Howl**

## **Midlands Group Record Fair held at St. Matthews Church Hall, Wolverhampton on October 8th 1994**

This was the second time we have used this venue although last year's gathering was somewhat grander in that we hosted the Society's AGM and *concours d'élégance* and competition for the best gramophone and phonograph.

This time it was just a record fair. We were delighted to see Mr and Mrs George Frow who had travelled. This time it was just a record fair. We were delighted to see Mr and Mrs George Frow up from Sevenoaks in Kent and Len Watts who had travelled up from Twickenham. Stall holders and visitors came from such far flung places as the Lake District, Hereford, Barnsley, Preston and Norwich. Pat and Marjorie Howl arranged the catering, which was first class. The hall itself proved suitable for such an occasion and the dealers offered a wide range of machines, spares, literature and every type of record you may care to mention.

There was one gripe - the usual one - where were the Society members? There are very few fairs where it is possible to see so much gramophone variety on offer and being in the centre of England, it ought to be possible for more members to attend. Nevertheless we made a modest profit for our Group's funds and made a contribution to the Society from sales of items from the Booklist.

We hope to stage another event at this venue in 1995. Watch this space for further details.

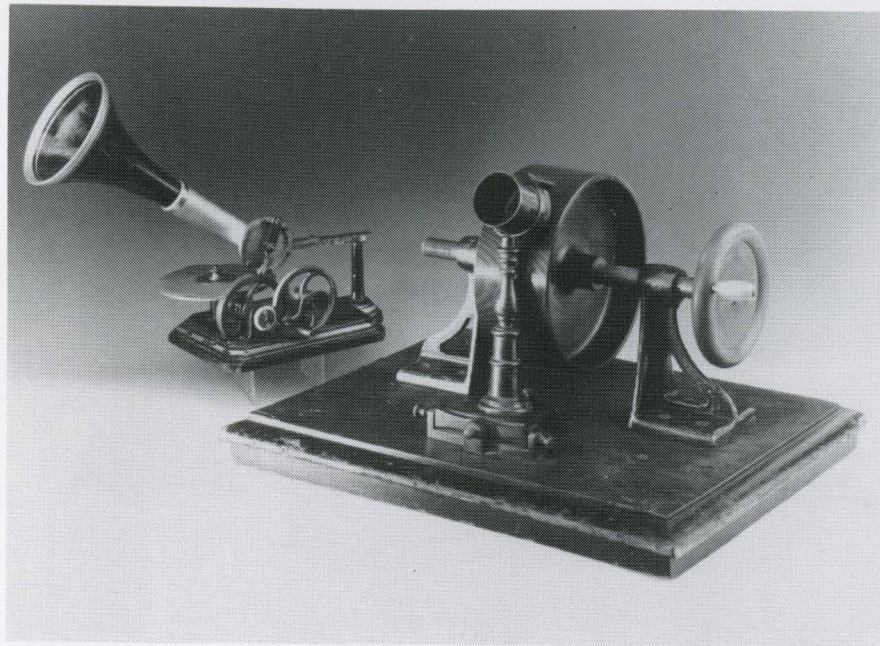
**Geoff Howl**

## **Forthcoming Meetings in London**

London Meetings are held at the National Sound Archive, 29 Exhibition Road, South Kensington, on the third Thursday evening of the month promptly at **6.45pm** (unless stated otherwise). Members' attention is drawn to the London Meetings Notice on page 100 of issue 188 (October 1992).

- |                          |  |
|--------------------------|--|
| <b>December 15th</b>     | <i>Relations</i> - Members night - Bring along your choice on this theme and let others share your enjoyment   |
| <b>January 19th 1995</b> | <i>Pianola Fol-de-Rolls</i> : A Potpourri of perfectly pedalled & pneumatically propelled music to start the New Year with Geoff Edwards   |
| <b>February 16th</b>     | Peter Copeland of the National Sound Archive<br>Details to be announced.   |
| <b>March 16th</b>        | <i>More of It's Not What It Seems</i> - Chris Hamilton takes a further look at commercial transfers of 78 rpm recordings   |
| <b>April 20th</b>        | <i>We Have Our Own Records</i> , Part 3 - Frank Andrews presents a further glimpse into the world of unusual labels  |
| <b>May 19th</b>          | Eliot Levin of Symposium Records will demonstrate his new cylinder playing machine. Members are invited to bring along their favourite cylinders and let Eliot reveal their true secrets on his machine! |





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